

would have to be made whether, of those uses, the most recent use would apply; disputation is likely to arise in the case of some names as to which of several is in 'most common use'; with the adoption of parts of the proposed *List of Available and Potentially Valid Names* (see Articles 77 and 78 in the Discussion Draft) the spellings of such names would differ from those in the List, which will record the original spellings.

2. To maintain the most common current spelling in use so long as the current generic allocation remains unchanged. *Advantage*: As in 1 above, but when a taxonomic change in genera results in a new form of the name becoming introduced into the non-taxonomic literature, opportunity would be taken to complete the change to the original spelling. *Disadvantage*: The same as the first three disadvantages given in 1 above.

3. To adopt the first reviser principle, namely that the first spelling used after the adoption of the 4th Edition would become invariable. *Advantage*: The rule would be clear-cut and is widely applied in nomenclature in lectotype selection, etc. *Disadvantage*: Instability of spelling would prevail until all usages had been ascertained in all literature published after the new edition and the first had been adopted.

4. To revert to the original spelling. *Advantage*: The provision would be applied in the same manner as that of confirming spellings, places of publication, date, etc.; there would be no doubt as to the correct spelling of any name. *Disadvantage*: Endings of many names in common use would be changed.

Comment

In the Discussion Draft, in this matter alone, the Editorial Committee thought it useful to present drafts of two options for consideration (Options 2 and 4 above).

The zoological community is asked to consider the matter carefully and assist the Commission with factual statements in support of a preferred outcome based on names in use in their own fields.

When preparing the Discussion Draft the Editorial Committee was exposed to strongly expressed opinions which caused it to draft the options which have been circulated. A decision must be made to adopt an outcome in the eventual Code that will result in stable and universally accepted spellings. It is hoped that zoologists will comment in such a way as to lead the Commission to adopt a solution that is easy to apply, is productive of least uncertainty for future users of names, and is least upsetting in the longer term.

Comment on availability of new names and need for ratification in the Zoological Record (Article 11b)

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1. By far the most perturbing aspect of the new draft Code is the proposal (Article 11b) that the availability of new animal names must be ratified by their appearance

as such in the *Zoological Record* (ZR) within five years of their first publication. Prima facie this might seem an attractive idea to some zoologists because of the latent possibility of it leading to a register of names — ones we are allowed to use in taxonomy as distinct from those we can forget all about. It is essential, however, that we differentiate between what might be taxonomically desirable and what is nomenclaturally ill-advised. In my view the proposal contained in Article 11b is unwise, impractical and potentially damaging to the future stability of names.

2. It is suggested in the draft that names first published after 1996 will be available (subject to the usual availability criteria) from their first publication but will lose this status — and therefore become unusable as valid names — if unrecorded (*as new names*) in ZR within the next five years, after which they will be deemed not to be available from the original publication.

3. This notion introduces into animal taxonomy two principles that have not existed previously but which are implicit in the new draft Code: secondary responsibility and temporary availability.

(a) *Secondary responsibility*. By this I mean the shifting onto the shoulders of the indexers/recorders for ZR the responsibility for whether new names shall ultimately live or die. Hitherto the author of a new name has been responsible for its availability, for ensuring that it satisfies the applicable criteria. That is as it should be: the author is the zoologist making the scientific judgement (right or wrong) that a new name is required for a supposedly new taxon. There are many reasons why a new name might fail to be recorded in ZR — it might, for example, be missed because it appeared in a very obscure work or an unmonitored journal or there might simply be an inadvertent oversight during the scanning of an article — yet this *bibliographic* database will (under the draft Article 11b) become implicitly blameworthy whenever a name has to be deprived of its availability under the five-year provision. It is inappropriate that ZR recorders, who cannot have knowledge of a taxon represented by a particular name, should become the unwitting arbiters of its nomenclatural fate and its taxonomic usability. Such matters should remain, as now, the responsibility of research zoologists (the primary community), aided if necessary by the Commission.

(b) *Temporary availability*. It is hard to see how this new concept can contribute to the stability of names and their authorship and dating. Consider, for example, the name of a new species of parasite, pest or disease vector. The literature can quickly burgeon for such a name, say for one born in a biomedical journal outside the monitoring scope of ZR and unlikely to be conventionally captured for the ZR database. Are we to abandon the use of such an important name on the technicality that it had failed to appear in ZR within the five-year time frame? And if we do, what then? A Commission case to validate it? The proposal of yet another name? The bringing into use of some little known later-proposed name that is a synonym but is available because recorded in ZR within its own five-year time frame? The Article 11b proposal not only carries with it much potential for instability and more work by the Commission to sort out 'temporary availability' problems but also implies a future heavier burden on the conscientious cataloguer. Names do not simply go away. We can safely predict that more annotation will be needed than in the past. For example, to explain a situation we might need an entry such as '*albus* Bloggs, 1999 (*Xus*) ... [Availability accepted, five-year *Zoological Record* ratification period unexpired]', or

'*albus* Bloggs, 1999: ratified *Zoological Record*, 2004 ...]', or '*albus* Bloggs, 1999 (*Xus*) ... [Unavailable under Article 11b, not recorded in *Zoological Record* before 2005]'. On every ground, the concept of temporary availability subject to *ZR* ratification is unwise.

4. *Practicalities*. The Article 11b and its Recommendations prompt many practical questions bearing on the viability of the proposal, for example:

(a) Can the date for a new name in the original publication and for its recording in *ZR* be determined with sufficient accuracy?

Answer: almost certainly not.

Day-dating of *both* will be essential: a name first published on 29 November 1998 will become permanently available if recorded on 28 November 2003 but not on 30 November 2003.

(b) What does 'recorded as such in the *Zoological Record*' mean?

Answer: unexplained and uncertain.

ZR can be searched in three formats: conventional printed copy, as compact disc and electronically online. The print version is issued annually in December and distributed by its publisher (Biological Abstracts Inc.) from Philadelphia, reaching most library shelves the following February-April, but the electronic database from which it derives is updated at intervals through the previous year. Which medium does the Editorial Committee have in mind? A zoologist searching online would find a new name recorded earlier than a zoologist dependent on the print version. There would probably be situations where the same name is recorded on the searchable electronic database within the five years but not issued in the printed *ZR* until after five years.

(c) Is it realistic to expect *ZR* to find all new names from all sources?

Answer: no.

No biological database is ever 100% comprehensive within its scope. *ZR* achieves miracles but does not, and cannot realistically be expected to, find every new animal name. Notwithstanding the proposed Recommendation 11A (advising that authors should draw the attention of *ZR* to any new name published), the finding and recording of new names in *ZR* is bound to remain primarily dependent on its own search procedures. These involve monitoring a portfolio of (currently) some 6500 periodicals and rely on the continuing accessibility of these periodicals. The number of periodicals that ideally should be scanned is growing as taxonomy moves further from its morphological base and as more countries start new journals in relevant fields (the biomedical and molecular fields, for example), while financial constraints affect libraries everywhere — to such an extent that even the periodicals base at the British Library (the main document source for *ZR* database production) has begun to shrink. Most taxonomists have had the experience of finding overlooked names in works that were for a long time unknown to them. To expect *ZR* to unearth every new name in every publication is quite unrealistic.

(d) Should the Code favour those with ready access to *ZR*?

Answer: no.

An extension of the *ZR* user and subscriber base is highly desirable but the continuing reality is likely to be that (say) an isolated worker studying bloodsucking arthropods in a provincial academy in China is much less likely to have *ZR* access than somebody studying such organisms in a research institute or museum in Europe

or North America. If permanent availability becomes ZR-dependent, low-level awareness of or access to this database in the presently less developed world will contribute to instability. Workers in such areas are likely to persist with the nomenclature known to them locally regardless of anything the Code might require.

5. *Conclusion.* In the light of the comments here made I am against the course of action proposed in draft Article 11b concerning the availability of new names and hope that other zoologists will join with me in urging the Editorial Committee to think again on this very important issue.

Comment on gender of genus-group names and on species-group epithets (Articles 30 and 31)

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I would like to register my strong objections to the introduction of linguistic laxity into the draft Code. We all know that modern education does not produce classical scholars. I myself have only smatterings of Latin and no Greek at all, yet I have never had any difficulties with forming new binomina — and I have published more than a hundred of them. Those who have no knowledge of classical languages can easily consult one of the many source books that provide instructions on name formation (as I write I have in front of me an excellent compendium that would enable anybody to form a correct binomen: R.W. Brown (1991), *Composition of Scientific Words*, Smithsonian Publications). The proposals do not abolish Latin and Greek, they only bastardise them and lower the standards. People will have to continue to use classical languages, but they will simply be free to use them incorrectly. Systematics is a discipline on the defensive these days as a supposedly obsolete branch of science ('surely all this was done in the 19th century?'). Lower standards will have further unfavourable impact on its standing in the scientific community and in the eyes of those who decide on apportioning support.

'Castrating' genera (Article 30) is a retrograde step. The proposal (Article 31) that specific names should be returned to their original gender form, even if grammatically incorrect, is absurd. Talk about instability! The suggestion that corrected endings should be retained in cases of 'existing usage' is vague and leaves the door open to all kinds of difficulties.

Comment on need for stability in names (Article 79c)

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It seems to me that the strong case for stability made in the covering explanatory notes by Kraus & Ride is not adequately conveyed by the present form of